

**SIGDOC FY'09 Annual Report**  
**July 2008 – June 2009**  
**Submitted by: Brad Mehlenbacher, Chair**

**\_SIGDOC Purpose**

The Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) Special Interest Group (SIG) on the Design of Communication (DOC) — ACM SIGDOC — emphasizes the design of communication for computer-mediated information products and systems. SIGDOC fosters the study and publication of processes, methods, and technologies for communicating and designing communication artifacts such as printed and online information, documentation designs and applications, multimedia and Web-based environments.

**\_SIGDOC Mission Statement**

Until 2003, SIGDOC focused on documentation for hardware and software. With the shift in focus from documentation to the “design of communication,” SIGDOC better positioned itself to emphasize the potentials, the practices, and the problems of multiple kinds of communication technologies, such as Web applications, user interfaces, and online and print documentation. SIGDOC focuses on the design of communication as it is taught, practiced, researched, and theorized in various fields, including technical communication, software engineering, information architecture, and usability.

The mission of SIGDOC includes

- Promoting the professional development of its members
- Encouraging interdisciplinary problem solving related to online and print documentation and communication technologies
- Providing avenues for publication and the exchange of professional information
- Supporting research that focuses on the needs and goals of humans in technological contexts, and
- Supporting the development and improvement of communication technologies, including applications, interfaces, and documentation.

**\_SIGDOC Officers**

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| • Brad Mehlenbacher, NC State University, USA   | Chair<br>Awards Chair<br>2009 General Co-Chair             |
| • Rob Pierce, IBM Rational Software, USA        | Vice-Chair<br>Newsletter Editor<br>2009 Local Arrangements |
| • Liza Potts, Old Dominion University, USA      | Secretary/Treasurer  |
| • Shaun Slattery, DePaul University, USA        | 2009 Program Co-Chair                                      |
| • Ashley Williams, Bridgeline Software, USA     | Information Director<br>2009 Program Co-Chair              |
| • Michael Albers, East Carolina University, USA | Graduate Competition Chair<br>2009 Poster Sessions Chair   |
| • Gloria Reece, Researcher, New Media & IT, USA | INTECOM Representative                                     |
| • Aristidis Protopsaltis, City University, UK   | 2009 General Co-Chair                                      |

• Scott Tilley, Florida Institute of Technology, USA	Past Chair
• Kathy Haramundanis, Compaq, USA	Member-at-Large
• Susan Jones, MIT, USA	Member-at-Large
• David Novick, University of Texas at El Paso, USA	Member-at-Large
• Clay Spinuzzi, University of Texas at Austin, USA	Member-at-Large
• Henrique O'Neill, ISCTE, Portugal	2008 General Co-Chair
• Manuela Aparicio, ISCTE, Portugal	2008 General Co-Chair
• Carlos J. Costa, ISCTE, Portugal	2008 Program Chair
• Irene Frawley, ACM HQ, USA	ACM Program Coordinator

### **Viability**

SIGDOC was found viable in 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004. In 2008, SIGDOC's viability review resulted in the following feedback:

The SGB congratulates SIGDOC on its operational performance and finds it viable to continue its status for the next 2 years. The SGB requests that SIGDOC undertake an evaluation of its decrease in membership and conference participation during that time, and that it present its conclusions and plan as part of its Spring 2010 viability review.

### **SIGDOC Conference Updates**

SIGDOC'08 was hosted by the Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa (ISCTE) or the Higher Institute for Work and Enterprise Sciences at the University of Lisbon, Portugal, from September 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The conference was the second ACM SIGDOC conference held outside North America and the first conference held in a non-English speaking country. Henrique O'Neill and Manuela Aparicio served as General Co-Chairs and Carlos J. Costa served as Program Chair. The program committee had 37 members — 23 from the USA, 11 from Europe, 1 from Africa, 1 from South America, and 1 from Australia.

The conference surplus was approximately \$7500.00.

Seventy-four papers were submitted from 13 countries, 33 full papers and technical papers, and — for the first time — 11 posters. The acceptance rate was 45 percent, a drop from 71 percent the previous year. The conference papers were published in the *Proceedings of the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference on Design of Communication (ACM P)* and emphasized documentation and design, usability, accessibility, evaluation and experimentation, document modelling, information design and learning, information systems and architecture, version control, aesthetics and creativity, knowledge management

The Invited Keynote Speaker was Dr. José Miguel Sales Dias, an internationally recognized expert in multimodal user interfaces, computer graphics, and augmented and mixed reality. Dr. Dias is director of the Microsoft Language Development Center in Porto Salvo, Portugal, and Associate Professor in the Department of Sciences and Information Technologies at ISCTE. Dr. Dias has BS in electrical engineering, a Msc in electrical and computer engineering from IST-UTL, and a Ph.D. in sciences and information technologies, specializing in computer graphics and multimedia, from ISCTE.

The co-recipients of the 2008 Rigo Award (for individual lifetime achievement in the field of communication design) were Dr. Susanne Bødker and Dr. Pelle Ehn. Dr. Susanne Bødker is a professor of human-computer interaction in the Computer Science Department at the University of Aarhus. Her research areas include participatory design and computer-supported cooperative work. She is associate editor of ACM ToCHI and

the *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*. Dr. Pelle Ehn is a professor of design in the School of Arts and Communication at Malmö University. His numerous books include *Work-Oriented Design of Computer Artifacts* (1988), *Manifesto for a Digital Bauhaus* (1998), *Participatory Design and the Collective Designer* (2002), *Participation in Interaction Design* (2006), and *Out of the Box* (2007). In particular, Drs. Bødker and Ehn were especially noted for their influential collaboration on *Computers and Democracy* (1987) which has influenced user and documentation testing approaches for several decades.

Arrangements for our upcoming annual conference, SIGDOC'09, are well underway (see <http://www.sigdoc.org/2009/>). SIGDOC'09 is being co-sponsored by the Indiana University School of Informatics (<http://www.informatics.indiana.edu/>) and the Kelley School of Business (<http://www.kelley.indiana.edu/>) and is being held at Biddle Hotel and Conference Center in the Indiana Memorial Union at Indiana University Bloomington, IN, USA (<http://www.iub.edu>). The conference organizers include Brad Mehlenbacher (NC State University, USA) and Aristidis Protopsaltis (City University, UK) as General Co-Chairs, Shaun Slattery (DePaul University, USA) and Ashley Williams (Bridgeline Software, USA) as Program Co-Chairs, and Rob Pierce (IBM Rational Software, USA) as Local Arrangements Chair. Pierce and Mehlenbacher visited the Bloomington site and established conference sponsorship from the Indiana University School of Informatics and the Kelley School of Business; in particular, arrangements were made that should encourage increased student attendance at the conference.

The conference Website is <http://www.sigdoc.org/2009/>) and lists the conference theme, invited speakers, and recipients of the 2009 Diana Award, Apple, Inc. (<http://www.apple.com>).

SIGDOC'10 is in the information-planning stages and discussions have centered around holding the conference in either São Paulo or São Carlos, Brazil. The SIGDOC Board is optimistic about our relationship with our Brazilian colleagues and it is encouraging that we had 11 people from Brazil submit 12 proposals for the SIGDOC'09 conference this year. Our primary contacts are Renata Fortes and Junia Anacleto, Department of Computer Science, Federal University of São Carlos-Brazil.

Discussions have also begun for SIGDOC'11 which the SIGDOC Board hopes will be held in Cambridge, MA, and SIGDOC'12 which might be held in Paris, France. Contact has been initiated with colleagues in India about a potential conference there. These efforts to plan further in advance are related to our goals of increasing SIGDOC membership.

## **\_Publications**

Rob Pierce continues to serve in the critical role of General Editor of SIGDOC's quarterly newsletter (<http://www.sigdoc.org/newsletter/current/>). The newsletter is e-mailed to all SIGDOC members, and archived versions of past newsletters are also available (<http://www.sigdoc.org/newsletter/archives/>). The newsletter consists of news from members (notes from the chair and from the general conference chair), future conference information, interesting items, feature articles, and job market information.

## **\_Partnerships**

This year, SIGDOC committed to the following in cooperation agreements:

- CNSR'09: Communications Networks and Services Research Conference
- DocEng 09: ACM Symposium on Document Engineering
- IWCMC'09: International Wireless Communications and Mobile Computing Conference

## **\_Membership**

SIGDOC had 316 members last year and this number has been dropping a little for the

last several years. The SIGDOC Website now explicitly details the benefits of joining SIGDOC (<http://www.sigdoc.org/join/>) in addition to encouraging existing members to volunteer (<http://www.sigdoc.org/members>). We have also password-protected our quarterly newsletter to encourage membership for this added benefit. Following last year's viability review, the SIGDOC Board has made it a priority to examine its membership and conference numbers and to write a plan for increasing them over the next several years. To that end, we have formed a membership committee and will establish its priorities and goals we this year. Conference planning for the next several conferences is currently ahead of schedule, reflecting this commitment. Finally, we have been exploring social networking spaces such as Wikipedia, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Ning; the implications of creating an organizational presence in these environments is under review.

### **.\_Key Issues for 2009-2010**

Key issues for SIGDOC in the coming year include the following:

- To finalize plans for addressing the current falling membership numbers for our 2010 viability review. Additional strategies for accomplishing this goal will be discussed at this year's annual SIG board meeting.
- To submit minor revisions of the SIGDOC Bylaws to reflect the 2003 renaming and orientation of the SIG.
- To establish conference locations and dates several years in advance.
- To continue to refine methods of carrying experiences and lessons learned in previous conferences into current and upcoming conferences.
- To return to our proposal for initiating an ACM SIGDOC journal and discuss re-submitting to the ACM Publications Board.